

President : If members have any supplementary questions to ask they must be more vigilant. They ought not to get up after the next question is called. Anyhow, I allow Mr. Narayana Aiyar now to put his question.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar : May I know the circumstances which necessitated the inspection by an outsider?

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon : Government wanted to have expert advice on two matters; one was with regard to the question of disposal of silt and the other with regard to the control of water.

Mr. E. P. Varghese (Nominated) : May I know whether the report was favourable or unfavourable?

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon : There is no question of its being favourable or unfavourable. Government merely wanted to have an expert advice on these matters.

Reduction of toll-gate contract amounts.

17 * **Mr. J. John Kattakayam :** Will the Government be pleased to state :

(a) whether the toll-gate contractors have applied to Government for a reduction of the contracted amount on account of the economic depression ; and

(b) the loss incurred by them on account of the economic depression ?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott (Chief Engineer, Roads, Buildings and Irrigation) : (a) Yes.

(b) Government do not keep any accounts of the collections made by toll-gate contractors.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : ക്ഷാമം നിമിത്തം അതിലേക്കു കണക്കുവെച്ചിട്ടില്ല എന്നു പറയുന്നു. എന്തു കൊണ്ടാണു ആ കണക്കു തരാൻ നിവൃത്തിയില്ലാത്തതു ?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : Government do not keep any account of the collections made by toll-gate contractors.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : ക്ഷാമം നിമിത്തം കുറെ പണം ഇളച്ചു കൊടുത്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആ കണക്കുതന്നെ താൻ ചോദിക്കുന്നതു .

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : No remission has been granted. The toll-gate contractors say that they lost money. But Government do not consider it necessary to go through their accounts. They are contractors who have contracted to pay a certain sum of money to Government.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : കുറവുപെയ്തു കൊടുത്ത തുക എത്രയെന്നാണു ചോദിക്കുന്നതു ?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : The Government do not allow remissions.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : അങ്ങനെയൊക്കെങ്കിൽ ആദ്യത്തെ ചോദ്യത്തിൽ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ള അപേക്ഷ തള്ളിക്കളയുമോ?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : Yes, the Government do not allow remissions on contracts.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : ഇളവുചെയ്തു കൊടുത്ത തുക എത്രയാണെന്നു അറിയാമോ?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : The Government have not made any remission.

Mr. H. O. L. Marikar (*Minachil cum Devicolam*) : Has the Government ordered the checking of the toll accounts in Kottayam and Alwaye Divisions?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : No, Sir.

Mr. H. O. L. Marikar : I may inform the Chief Engineer that I am the contractor at Kumili and that my accounts have been actually checked and I hold the records.

President : That is the experience not as a member of this House but as a contractor.

Mr. H. O. L. Marikar : As a member who knows the actual fact that the accounts have been checked I say that, and now the Chief Engineer denies it. Has the Government got any approximate idea as to what amount a toll-gate would fetch?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : My answer was that Government have not ordered any checking of toll-gate accounts, and it is so.

Mr. H. O. L. Marikar : According to the toll rules people have got to pay toll. Have Government any idea as to the amount they will realise by auction, how many vehicles will pass through the toll-gates and what amount will be realised at each toll-gate?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : So far as I am aware, Government have not taken any statistics. Government merely depend upon the auction amount.

President : If a man comes and bids, it is his responsibility to see whether he will realise the amount bid or not. It is not the duty of Government to inform him that he will not realise that amount and hence he should not bid for such an amount.

Mr. H. O. L. Marikar : My point is this. The people passing through a particular toll-gate pay Rs. 20,000 in a year and suppose the Government auction this toll-gate for Rs. 1,000 only. In such a case all the money that the people pay while passing through that toll-gate does not reach the Government coffers.

President : You do not expect Government to find beforehand how much amount is going to be realised from a particular gate and to warn the contractors that they cannot realise beyond a certain amount.

Mr. H. O. L. Marikar : Government must get what the people pay as toll. In fact the Government is not getting even a portion of it.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai (Municipal Councils) : May I know whether the Department reserves to itself the right to look into the accounts of the contractors?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : The Department may do so.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know whether the Department looked into the accounts before preparing this answer?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : No.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know whether there is any chance of excess collections being made at the toll-gates?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : I do not think so.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai (Commerce and Industry, South) : It is stated by the Chief Engineer that Government do not allow remissions on contracts. May I know whether it is a new policy that the Government are now following?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : I believe that some remissions have been allowed under special circumstances, but there are no special circumstances of similar nature this year, necessitating the grant of remission.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : May I know how the Government came to the conclusion that there are no special circumstance this year necessitating the grant of a remission?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : The economic depression now is no worse than it was at the time of auction.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : Am I to understand that the Government without looking into the accounts of the contractors have come to the conclusion that they have not lost?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : That is a question for the contractor to answer. He made certain contracts and he has to abide by them. If he collects a bigger sum than he contracted for, certainly he does not come and say "I have collected so much more money and for this excess I am giving you a cheque."

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : Apart from that philosophy, Sir, may I ask the Government member how he came to the conclusion that there were special circumstances when Government gave remission and that now the circumstances are not similar?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : There were certain special circumstances some years ago. I do not remember the exact details.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : That is why I ask, Sir, how it is that the Government comes to the conclusion that the economic depression does not allow the contractor to be given remission.

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : When we consider that we are getting a better return under Road Development Fund than we had last year, it means that more motor cars are running now and that the collection in the toll-gates must be certainly more than it was last year.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : So, am I to understand that it is merely on surmise and not as a result of enquiry that the Government think that no remission should be given?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : The member may understand it in any way he likes. The statement I wish to make is—

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : Sir, I rise to a point of order. It is not a question of my understanding it in any way I like, but it is a question in what way the member wants the House to understand him. I submit that the expression used by the member, that I can understand it in any way I like, is not parliamentary.

President : Please wait till the member finishes.

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : We do not keep the contractors' accounts and we find no reason to grant remissions.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : What are the considerations that weighed with the Government to see that the contractors are not losing?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : That is the contractors' business. If they overbid, they lose.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : That is not my question, Sir. He said that the contractors lose on account of the economic depression and on account of circumstances beyond their control. I want to know how they came to the conclusion that the contractors actually lost?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : I did not say so. The fact is that economic depression is no worse now than it was twelve months ago.

Mr. S. Piraviperumal Pillai : May I know how the Chief Engineer came to the conclusion that the economic depression was no worse for his department than for other departments?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : It is no worse for the P. W. D. than it is for other departments.

Mr. P. Padmanabhan Tampi : (*Kalkulam cum Vilavankod*): May I know the total collections for 1110 and for 1111?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott : It was Rs. 5,21,160 in 1110. It is Rs. 6,24,250 this year.